

REVIVAL OF A COLONY OF *EREBIA DISCOIDALIS*
FROM MOUSE ATTACK AT THE PAS, MANITOBA
(LEPIDOPTERA, SATYRIDAE)¹

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I have watched and sampled a colony of *Erebia discoidalis* Kirby at The Pas since 1950. It has done some interesting things in that interval. The colony is 10 minutes walk from the house and along the Saskatchewan River and about a half mile west of the Roman Catholic cemetery. (For further description of the botanical habit of this colony see the writer's paper in Bull. Assoc. of Minnesota Entomologists, Vol. 2, pgs. 47 to 49, 1967-68).

The colony was very strong in '48, '49, and 1950. In 1952 it positively blew up in a population explosion with hundreds upon hundreds of individuals flitting a foot above the ground in the brilliant sunny days of mid-May. Various cripples appeared with non-symmetric wings, dwarfs, and even a single specimen with a concave primary wing. Many specimens are in the winter's collection at The Pas.

It was still at a high in 1953 but dropped considerably in numbers in 1954. Still two dozen specimens could be seen on the wing at a time in its habitat.

The colony remained at a constant medium level for the next 12 or 13 years. 1967 brought a phenomenal change to my *discoidalis* colony; only two specimens were seen on the wing throughout the whole spring. Where 15 years previously there were hundreds of this single brooded species on the wing, now almost none were to be seen.

This sudden change was likely caused mainly by the sudden abundance of a large native mouse (*Microtus pennsylvanicus drummondi*). This occurred in pest proportions in a limited area. It thoroughly

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riddled the old brown grass in which the pupae of *discoidalis* overwinter. The tunnels of the mice and their droppings seemed to be everywhere. There were reports of vegetables being spoiled at Rahl's Island—five miles away and also in the Carrot River Valley to the west of The Pas.

E. discoidalis continued to be rare in May 1968 and also in 1969. More individuals were seen on the wing in 1970. May 1971 produced somewhat more. The population now appears on the road to recovery.

It thus took a full five years for recovery from the mouse attack on this colony.

There seems to be little in the literature on Butterflies and mice predations. This note is intended to remedy this situation somewhat.

Descriptors: Lepidoptera; Satyridae; *Erebia discoidalis* in Manitoba.